

The reduction in the State's contribution to the Health Fund will negatively affect its long-term solvency. Active and retired teachers have been paying into the Health Fund with the understanding that it will be there for them when they retire. This proposed 9% increase in the premium share financially harms the oldest retirees, many of whom are unable to pay a significant increase in their medical premium. Over 2,000 of these individuals retired before the Enhancement Act of 1986 and thus are receiving pensions based on minimal teaching salaries. This increase is especially difficult for retired teachers who on fixed incomes are already facing rising costs for food, gas, property taxes cost.

The Governor's new plans for the Retired Teachers assumes a one size fits all model which is not the case. Retired teacher health benefits vary widely from town to town, municipal health plan versus state health plan, when teachers were hired and whether they are eligible for Medicare. For certain teachers whose pensions may be around \$18,000 per year an increased cost of \$350 per person is an significant and for many an unbearable hardship. My husband and I are doubly affected because we are both retired teachers.

Retired Teachers have not seen an increase in the state subsidy for their health insurance since 1996 when it was raised to \$110 which at the time covered almost 70% of the cost, today the existing subsidy covers around 20% of the basic plan which does not include vision or dental.

We understand the difficult economic times facing both the state and municipalities and could understand not seeing an increase in the health insurance subsidy but cannot understand a decrease in the subsidy when overall state spending is being increased.

Please help Connecticut's retired teachers maintain the coverage they need and deserve.

~ Joretta and Bill Kilcourse